

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Confirming for record, following is text President's reply to second message from U Thant (contained reftel) which was transmitted to Mission by other means October 25.

your
"I have/further message of today and I continue to understand and welcome your efforts for a satisfactory solution. I appreciate and share your concern that great caution be exercised pending the inauguration of discussions.

"If the Soviet Government accepts and abides by your request "that Soviet ships already on their way to Cuba . . . stay away from the interception area" for the limited time required for preliminary discussions, you may be assured that this Government will accept and abide by your request that our vessels in the Caribbean "do everything possible to avoid direct confrontation with Soviet ships in the next few days in order to minimize the risk of any untoward incident." I must inform you, however, that this is a matter of great urgency in view of the fact that certain Soviet ships are still proceeding toward Cuba and the interception area.

I share

Drafted by:

Telegraphic transmission, and

classification approved by:

10/11/68

IO - Harlan Cleveland

S/C:Went

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"I share your hope that Chairman Khrushchev will also heed your appeal and that we can then proceed urgently to meet the requirement that these offensive military systems in Cuba be withdrawn, in order to end their threat to peace. I must point out to you that at present work on these systems is still continuing."

END

RUSK

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